# GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETINS

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© *A. B. Wilse*

**IN NORWAY BARLEY VENTURES INTO THE ARCTIC**

**The northernmost-growing grain, barley, matures in chilly latitudes which wheat and rye cannot endure. On sloping farms of Norwegian valleys, the barley harvest is stacked loosely around poles to dry. The farmer wears "half-soled" overalls, with thriftily reinforced seat of leather (Bulletin No. 5).**

**HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS**

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**General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.**

## Greenland Brings War Questions to New World

GERMANY'S occupation of Denmark has stirred comment in the Western Hemisphere on the status of Greenland, Denmark's American colony, because of the Monroe Doctrine, which was formulated to thwart future expansion by European powers in the New World. The Danish island colony lies northeast of Maine by some 1,000 miles, and 300 miles northeast of Labrador. The island's northwest tip is separated from Canada by channels narrowing to 50 miles.

Most of Greenland throughout the year is less green than white. A vast ice sheet covers 84 per cent of the island. The snows of millenniums have built up a crystal blanket that in places is six or seven thousand feet thick, burying deep valleys and mountains alike. The ice cap over the central plateau contains ice and snow enough to cover the entire United States many hundreds of feet deep. This tremendous ice cap has countless glacier tentacles that extend down into the coast fjords, perpetually feeding icebergs to the North Atlantic.

### World's Largest Island

Greenland is the only overseas land under Danish dominion having the status of a colony. (Iceland has been independent, but recognizing the Danish King.)

Greenland is the largest island in the world. It would require almost three land areas the size of Texas to cover Greenland. If the island could be set down on the United States with its northernmost point on the Canadian border at North Dakota, its southern tip would extend south to the Rio Grande at Brownsville, Texas. At its greatest width it would spread across the United States a distance equal to that from New York to Chicago. Yet it has only 16,000 inhabitants—400 Danes and the remainder Eskimos (illustration, next page).

The island lies approximately in the same latitude as the Scandinavian Peninsula; but while Greenland is flanked only by icy Arctic currents, Scandinavia is bathed by the warm Gulf Stream. In midwinter, temperatures range from 50 to 60 degrees below zero. Willows and birch trees grow only three feet high.

### Modern Town Near Settlement Site of Eric the Red

Mosses and lichens and a few hardy flowers and shrubs spring to sudden life in the summer along the ice-free fringes of coast, but few vegetables except radishes, turnips, and lettuce can be grown. Eskimos live on polar bear, seal, walrus, caribou, white whale, narwhal, and musk ox, varying this diet with fish and the eggs of the eider duck, the brant goose, and gull.

Angmagssalik, a village of several hundred Eskimos and a handful of Danes—a trader, missionary, doctor, and a few minor Danish officials—is the only permanent settlement on the European side of Greenland. In the summer the flow from glacial rivers centering at Angmagssalik tends to break the ice flow from the north, thus affording the best approach to the coast.

When the famous Viking, Eric the Red, discovered Greenland in 983 A. D., he established a settlement west of Cape Farewell, on the coast facing Canada. On the narrow ice-free strip of coast 5,000 Scandinavians established colonies, one at Ivigtut and another farther north. They built a cathedral, 16 churches, a monastery, and a convent. The settlements disappeared before Columbus's time.

Northwest Greenland was explored and occupied as a base for American polar expeditions, notably by Peary and Greely.

The towns of Greenland are few and unimportant. Godthaab, the chief settlement, on the west coast, has only a few hundred inhabitants. Julianehaab,



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*Photograph by Ernest B. Schoedsack*

**A WOODEN, ONE-WOMAN-POWER MILL FOR EACH FAMILY HUSKS RICE FOR SIAM'S DINNER**

**Her weight on one end of the lever lifts the log pestle at the other end, which then drops into the large wooden mortar filled with rice. The pounding breaks the brown husk from the white grain. The heavy rice sinks and the children lift the husk into a basket for the livestock. Although rice is the staff of life for about one-third of the world's population, it is less important to international commerce than other cereals, because a large proportion of the rice-eating peoples grow and mill the grain they eat (Bulletin No. 5).**

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## Stamps: Thumbnail Geography

THE black penny stamp of Great Britain in 1840 made May 6 memorable as the birthday of the first adhesive postal paper. The subsequent century has been a success story of advance from rag-paper to riches for the modest little gummed rectangles, which started out merely to carry the mail and arrived as a minor industry and a major indoor sport.

The famous first adhesive was a penny portrait, in austere black and white, of young Queen Victoria's profile. The modern stamps bear a variety of devices, from kangaroos to rainbows. Some are postal peepholes into their country's resources. Colombia, for example, has stamped the nation's letters with pictures of oil wells, gold mines, emerald mines, and coffee plantations. Others are one-glimpse sightseeing tours through the land of their origin, such as the 1934 National Parks issue of the United States or Japan's 1935 series of views of Mount Fuji.

### Little Lands Loom Large in Philately

The stamp is born to travel, and modern governments make it carry a public message in addition to the private one it is paid to escort. Even the most non-committal of these inch-high ambassadors hint of the language, the government, and currency prevailing in their homelands. Postal paper from the Union of South Africa travels in pairs, each inscribed in a different language, because Afrikaans and English are both accepted as official. Some stamps become miniature Marco Polos of the mails, carrying accounts of wonders wherever they go—the kookaburra of Australia or the Iguassú Falls of Brazil.

Collectors who cruise through stamp catalogues learn geography from a highly colored philatelic landscape. Monaco and Vatican City, whose small areas could almost be blanketed with the stamps sold, can compete for attention on an equal basis with vast Brazil.

Many of these migratory postal patches, like the well-seasoned travelers that they are, carry maps. The United States has mapped itself on stamps several times. A relief map of the entire nation not two inches wide, showing mountain ranges and river systems, appeared on the 1926 air mail 10¢ dark blue stamp, with higher priced variations in olive brown or yellow green. The 1936 3¢ purple, to commemorate the centenary of the opening of the Oregon Territory, shows a map of the Territory and the States which compose it today, against a background of Oregon Trail scenes. The 1937 3¢ purple observed the 150th anniversary of the Northwest Territory with a miniature map of that region flanked by portraits of the notable pioneers, Manasseh Cutler and Rufus Putnam. Washington, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and their capitals are mapped on the 1939 3¢ rose violet stamp, to commemorate their admission to Statehood.

### Mailman Becomes Map-Maker

Sometimes the postage stamp rushes in where map-makers fear to tread, and boundary controversies are raised or settled on postal paper. The 1937 1 peso stamp of Argentina presented an outline map of South America in light blue, with the Argentine area colored in brown black. The Falkland Islands, off Argentina's coast in the Atlantic, were also colored the Argentine brown black. Meanwhile, any collector would know that the Falkland Islands were issuing their own stamps adorned with British sovereigns, as a Crown Colony of Great Britain.

The Irish Free State, comprising most of Ireland, issued a penny carmine rose



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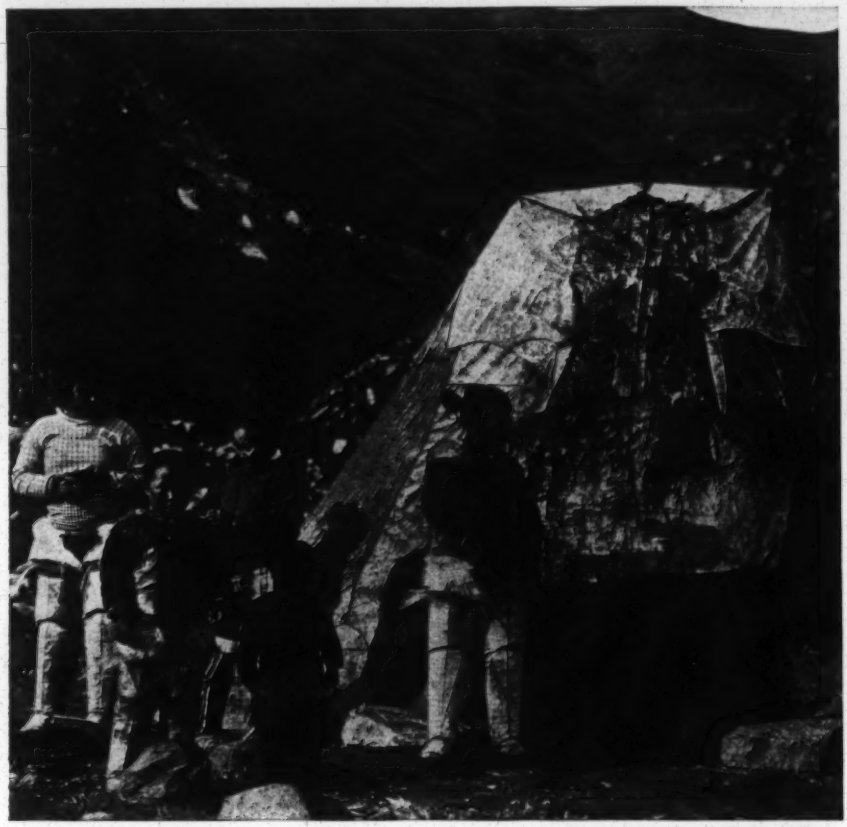
near the southwest point of the island, is close to the site of the settlement of Eric the Red.

Greenland's principal export has always been blubber, mostly of the seal, from which oil is made. Danish imports of blubber, together with skins, salted and canned fish, eiderdown and feathers and cryolite, have a value of $1,500,000 a year. Denmark sells foodstuffs, tobacco, ammunition, lumber, and hardware to her colony, for which Greenland pays about $600,000 annually.

Note: For additional material about Greenland, see "Ships, from Dugouts to Dreadnoughts," *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1938; "Flying Around the North Atlantic," September, 1934; "Naturalist with MacMillan in the Arctic," March, 1926; "MacMillan Arctic Expedition Returns," November, 1925; "'Bowdoin' in North Greenland," June, 1925.

The southern section of Greenland, where most of the settlements are located, is shown on The Society's map of the Atlantic Ocean. Greenland's ice cap, its glaciers, the East Greenland and West Greenland Currents are plainly indicated on this map. The Atlantic Ocean map was released as a supplement to the July, 1939, *Geographic*. Unfolded copies are available from The Society's headquarters at 50c (paper) and 75c (linen).

**Bulletin No. 1, May 6, 1940.**



*Photograph by Donald B. MacMillan*

**SEALSKIN KEPT THE SEALS WARM: NOW IT WARMS THE ESKIMOS**

**The sealskin covering of the hut, or tupik, is lapped over the rooftree and fastened much as the end of a package is wrapped. Stones from the rocky hillsides make a wind-breaking wall (left background) and also hold down the edges of the hut. Hip boots of sealskin are part of the costume of both women and children. These "old-fashioned girls" have not yet abandoned the hourglass style of dressing their hair; their more modern sisters tuck their locks under stocking caps. This summer home is in the Eskimo settlement of Nerky (Meat) beside Smith Sound, on Greenland's west coast facing Canada.**

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## New Europe Map Shows Six Countries Enlarged

WHILE German sovereignty over "protectorates" in Scandinavia is still debatable, the map-makers are showing that previous German expansion has brought the Reich's area to 175 per cent of its post-World War size. The successive stepping-stones to this German aggrandizement — Austria, Bohemia-Moravia, Danzig, Memel, Poland—have added 136,000 square miles to the Germany that emerged from the Versailles Peace Conference, and have raised it from Europe's fourth largest country to the second largest. The area now under the swastika, 317,000 square miles, is half again as large as France.

The new enlarged Germany and partitioned Poland appear on the new map of Europe and the Near East released this month by the National Geographic Society. The northwestern section of Poland, west of a line from East Prussia to Slovakia, has been annexed to Germany. This includes the "Polish Corridor" province, the cities of Lodz and Poznan, and the industrial-mining region around Cieszyn (Teschen). The slightly larger block of Poland's central core, with Warsaw and Krakow, has been set aside as the Government General of Poland.

### Russian Gains and Restored Lithuanian Capital

Three additional countries of mid-Europe showing increases on the new map are Hungary, Lithuania, and Soviet Russia. Hungary's northeastern boundaries now contain the Carpatho-Ukrainian region which formerly was the eastern tip of Czecho-Slovakia. In the partition of Poland, the U.S.S.R. occupied the eastern section of the country, setting a new boundary principally along the Bug River. Lithuania received from the U.S.S.R. the city of Wilno (Vilna) and adjacent territory, thus restoring the "kidnapped" traditional Lithuanian capital which Poland had held since 1920.

Diminished Finland appears for the first time on this map, with colored stripes marking frontiers now under adjustment. Soviet Russia, already the largest country in Europe, is further increased in size by westward extensions of boundary on the Rybachi (Fisher) Peninsula, in the north; in the Salla region, above Finland's waistline; in the Karelian region north and west of Lake Ladoga, including Viipuri; and in the Gulf of Finland around the islands west of the Russian naval base of Kronstadt. Finnish losses around Viipuri have moved the frontier to a minimum of 85 miles from Leningrad, Soviet Russia's only western port, and have placed Ladoga entirely within Russia; the now Russian lake appears on the new map with its altered name, Ladozhskoe.

### Eight Pipe-Line Systems for 42 Per Cent of World's Oil

The other two extensions of territory indicated on the map are Italy's protectorate over Albania, due east across the Adriatic, and Turkey's absorption of Hatay. The short-lived "Republic of Hatay," between southern Turkey and the Levant States mandated to France, brought Turkey the ancient city of Antioch, or Antakya, and the east Mediterranean port Iskenderon (Alexandretta).

Among the railroads shown on the map are the strategic short lines crossing Norway to the western ports of Narvik, Trondheim, and Bergen; the Swedish network, including the "iron-mine" spur to the port of Lulea; the now completed Berlin-to-Baghdad line, whose new links in Turkey and Iraq have at last brought 20th century fulfillment to a 19th century transportation dream.



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stamp in 1922 blithely mapping the entire Emerald Isle under the name of Eire, with no reference to British-controlled Northern Ireland.

The 1928 1½ piaster red stamp of Cyprus, commemorating its 50th century as a British colony, bore a map of the island, showing such time-honored place names as Paphos. The 1938 two penny stamp of Fiji presented in green and orange brown a map of the larger islands, showing latitude and longitude. Two of Costa Rica's 1936 stamps showed the country's Cocos Island, of "buried treasure" fame, on a map quaintly resembling a treasure hunt chart. Among the many other postal maps of American countries are the 1935 air mail series of Bolivia, the 1937 issue of Venezuela, and the 1938 5 centavo carmine rose of Ecuador.

*Drawn by James M. Darley*

**MAP PORTRAIT AND STAMP MINIATURE SHOW THE CRESCENT OF GREECE**

**The broken crescent of Greece and its islands, curved along the Aegean Sea, makes an unmistakable profile on the 4 drachma dark blue stamp. This centenary issue commemorated expansion since 1830, when the new nation started with the area shown unshaded on the stamp. The stamp's "Ellas" (Hellas) is the Grecians' name for their country.**

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## Oil-Rich Caucasus "Hot Spot" of Near East

AN OLD theater of war in Asia Minor assumed new importance recently with reports of troop movements in the Caucasus border region between Turkey and Soviet Russia.

Once a battleground between Turkish and Russian forces, the Caucasus region is a vast mountainous isthmus separating the Black and Caspian Seas. Across it, for roughly 700 miles, march the wild, barren ranges of the Caucasus (Kavkazski) Mountains, containing Europe's highest peak, Elborus, which rises 18,400 feet. Practically all of the isthmus proper, including the mountain chain, lies within the boundaries of the U.S.S.R. The southern border is split between Turkey on the west and Iran on the east.

### Treasure Chest of Oil and Minerals

The Caucasus region contains one of the world's richest oil fields. From the Baku district, on the Caspian Sea, petroleum has been extracted in large quantities for more than 60 years without depleting a supply still rated well over a billion tons. In addition, new sources of oil are being tapped in other regions. Across the isthmus, pipe lines carry the oil from Baku, the oil capital on the Caspian, more than five hundred miles west to the Black Sea ports of Batumi (usually Anglicized to "Batum") and Poti. At Batumi, the pipes are only about ten miles north of the Turkish frontier.

Besides its oil wealth the Caucasus region holds vast stands of such valuable timber as oak and beech. Its fertile valleys produce grain as well as tobacco and cotton. On the slopes of its well-watered hills, herds of cattle and flocks of sheep graze. In the mountains are found rich deposits of manganese, copper, silver, iron, coal, sulphur, and rock salt.

Converging at Baku, railways running on both sides of the mountains now link the chief towns of the isthmus. The city is a terminus also for two airlines, one from Moscow, the other from the Georgian town of Tiflis. A southern spur of the Soviet rail system, which parallels much of the Soviet frontier with Iran and Turkey, meets Turkey's eastbound line at Leninakan (Alexandropol), about 130 miles southeast of the Black Sea.

### Refuge of a Dozen Races

To the ancients the Caucasus was a region of romance and mystery, against whose mountain wall conquerors, traders, and wanderers advanced in vain. To it, by way of the Black Sea, came the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. Prometheus, in the legends of the Greeks, was bound to one of its peaks in punishment for giving mortals the secret of fire.

Innumerable languages and dialects are spoken in the scattered settlements of the Caucasus Mountains, described by historians as "an ethnological museum, where the invaders of Europe, as they traveled west to be manufactured into nations, left behind samples of themselves in their raw condition."

To this day the people of the Caucasus form an extraordinary racial mixture, including Armenians, Georgians, Tatars, Cossacks, Persians, Kurds, Syrians; remnants of Greek, Roman, Hun, and Mongol invasions; and even Russified Scandinavians who sailed down the Volga to the Caspian Sea on a military adventure in the 10th century.

Although many conquerors came and went, for twenty centuries the Georgians



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The pipe lines, delineated on the map as red threads stretched boldly across frontiers and deserts, tap more than 42 per cent of the world's estimated oil reserves. Albania, rarely thought of as a petroleum producer, has a 45-mile pipe line from the new oil town of Petrolia to the southern port of Valona. Romania, with the 2 per cent of the world's supply which is the largest source in Europe proper, has a pipe network that siphons oil directly east to the coast at Constanta as well as south to the Danubian port of Giurgiu. Iran has two pipe line systems, one reaching from the Iran-Iraq frontier to Kermanshah in the north, the other following the Karun valley southward toward the Persian Gulf. Iraq, with an estimated 9 per cent of the world's oil, is the origin of the spectacular pipe lines from Kirkuk to the shores of the Mediterranean (illustration, below). For the U.S.S.R., with almost a fourth of the total known oil supply, the map shows three pipe line systems, each comparable in length to Iraq's long-distance champion. Two of them cross the Caucasian region between the Black Sea and the Caspian; the other connects the oil fields on the north Caspian coast with industrial regions in the Ural Mountains.

An inset map of the Middle East shows the region from Suez east to India, from Turkey south to the Somaliland colonies in Africa. This is the "Moslem World," for the population is principally Mohammedan throughout, barring the island of Cyprus and the small Christian land of Lebanon. Except for Turkey and the southern corners of the U.S.S.R., these Moslem lands are principally under the influence of Great Britain. France controls the Levant States, and Italy shares in African colonies. But Great Britain has economic influence in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and Afghanistan; has a treaty and a military force in Egypt and Iraq; has Palestine and Trans-Jordan under mandate; has Aden and the Hadhramaut under a protectorate; and influences the rest of the Arabian Peninsula and Baluchistan through the government of India.

Note: The Map of Europe and the Near East, described above, was released as a supplement to the May, 1940, *National Geographic Magazine*. Unfolded copies are available from The Society's Washington, D. C., headquarters at 50c (paper) and 75c (linen).

**Bulletin No. 3, May 6, 1940.**

*Photograph Courtesy the Lincoln Electric Company*

**THROUGH PIPE ARTERIES FLOWS THE LIFE BLOOD OF MODERN TRANSPORT AND WAR**

**Oil in pipe lines courses along caravan trails across the desert, beside the camel tracks through the Holy Land. From northern Iraq one line reaches westward 620 miles to the Mediterranean at the port of Haifa in Palestine, with a 545-mile northern branch taking a short cut to Tripoli in Lebanon.**

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## Commodities in the News: No. 1, Grains and a Rationed Breadbasket

ONE of the first casualties in Europe's war was food abundance, and since then to balance a diet has called for tightrope-walking skill. The danger line crossed the breadline last month when Romania's government decreed a ban on new contracts for the export of grains.

Europe is a grain-purchaser from two hemispheres, and upsets in her cereal markets cause jolts half a world away. Wheat, corn, oats, barley, and rye form the grain front on which Europe's buying battle is waged. Rice, the ancient white cereal of the East, is the only major grain unshaken by Europe's crisis.

### World "Rice Bowls" in Siam, Burma, Indo-China

These grains have been man's daily dinner guest in a prehistoric friendship that was old when the Stone Age was new. Scientists point out that it is this immemorial cultivation by man which has raised those grasses known as grains to their present productive status. The wheat of Stone Age man, although he had five varieties, had a much smaller grain than that of today.

Before transport inventions, the grain zones of the world were, roughly, three: corn, or maize, in the Western Hemisphere; wheat in the western part of the Eastern Hemisphere; and rice in much of the eastern part. Within historic times these limitations have fallen. Corn from the little patches of American Indians has come to be an important crop in Italy (illustration, next page), for *polenta*, and in Romania, where it is eaten as *mamaliga*. The Holy Land, once limited mainly to barley for bread, has been introduced to wheat. Egypt, largely a wheat land when Joseph filled Pharaoh's granaries, has welcomed rice from the Orient.

Rice, of which Europeans learned when Alexander sought a new world to conquer in India, had been planted with religious ritual in China for several thousand years. That part of China north of the monsoon region is non-rice-eating; wheat and barley, kaoliang and millet are the northern staples. One of the advantages of rice in the crowded countries of the Orient is its high yield—approximately 60 bushels of grain per acre, two or three times the world average for wheat. Its speedy growth is another advantage; under irrigation beneath a subtropical sun, the stalk may heighten nine inches a day. About 85 per cent of the world's crop grows in Asia, with India following China in volume of production. Burma, Siam (Thailand) (illustration, inside cover), and Indo-China, however, lead in rice export.

### Barley Endures Higher and Colder Climates

Wheat is one of the staples of modern commerce as well as diet. International trade is so great that on a given day there may be 160 million tons, roughly, of wheat in transit, in addition to the quantities in storage in elevators and barns. The largest wheat crops are harvested in the U.S.S.R. and the United States, but the chief exporters are Canada, Australia, and the Argentine. The European countries which ordinarily have an exportable surplus are the U.S.S.R., Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. Great Britain leads in the international wheat purchases.

Although Europeans speak of "corn" for grain in general and wheat in particular, to Americans "corn" means maize, or Indian corn. The chief grain of pre-Columbian Indians, it is still the staple of many Latin American countries, such as Mexico, where the corn-meal *tortilla* is the staff of life. The Corn Belt of



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(of whom Joseph Stalin is one by birth) were the most powerful group of the isthmus peoples. In the 19th century, the Russian Empire extended its domination over the entire region, including a slice of what is now the northeast shoulder of Turkey. Turkey, however, still challenged Russia's supremacy along the border, with Great Britain first on the side of Turkey, in the Crimean War, and later supporting Russia, during the World War. When the present boundaries were set, the isthmus on the Russian side was divided into the Armenian, Azerbaijan, Daghestan, and Georgian Soviet Republics.

Note: See also "Old and New in Persia," *National Geographic Magazine*, September, 1939; "The World's Greatest Overland Explorer" (Marco Polo), November, 1928; "Russia of the Hour," November, 1926; "From England to India by Automobile," August, 1925; "The Fight at the Timberline," August, 1922; "Modern Persia and Its Capital" also "Persian Caravan Sketches," April, 1921; "The Land of the Stalking Death," November, 1919; "Between Massacres in Van," August, 1919; and "Russia's Orphaned Races," October, 1918.

The Caucasus region is shown on the map of Europe and the Near East, which also charts the Near Eastern pipe lines in red. This map has just been released as a supplement to the May, 1940, *National Geographic Magazine*. The southern section of the Caucasus is also shown on the Map of Bible Lands and reference is made to the Biblical history of this region. Copies of the maps are available at 50c (paper) and 75c (linen).

**Bulletin No. 4, May 6, 1940.**

*Photograph by Maynard Owen Williams*

**"MOUNTAINS OF THE ARK" HAVE BEEN LANDMARKS SINCE THE DAYS OF NOAH**

**Mount Ararat, with its two lofty peaks, was the highest point of land known to Mesopotamians who told the early versions of Noah's Ark coming to rest there after the Flood. Mount Elborus, farther north, in the main Caucasus range, is only 1,500 feet higher. Ararat tops the knob of land beside which the frontiers of Turkey and Iran reach that of the Armenian Soviet Republic in the U.S.S.R. The ruined church is one of several on the plain north of Ararat, the birthplace of the Armenian Church, which still has its center in the nearby Soviet Russian town of Vagarshapat, known to devout Armenians as Echmiadzin.**

the central United States, reaching north and west to Minnesota and south to Kansas, is the largest stretch of corn country in the world. Much of the crop, however, does not reach American tables as grain, but as meat; after fattening the majority of the nation's commercially-raised pork, and feeding quantities of cattle and sheep, the corn enters national trade "on the hoof." This, the only new grain which America has given the Old World, is now a food staple in parts of Africa.

Barley and oats, like corn, surrender their food value to man often in the shape of meat. Both are giving way to wheat as a human food, but are valuable as fodder. Barley, however, has the special advantage of surviving in the widest range of climates (illustration, cover). As a bread grain, along with rye, it is still important in the "black bread" regions of Europe bordering the Baltic and also in southeastern Europe, where poor soil or chill climate may ban any abundance of other grain. Barley's easy adjustment to harsh climates makes it the mountaineer's friend, growing high on the slopes of lofty ranges, and makes scientists wonder whether it may not be the oldest of all cultivated grains.

**Bulletin No. 5, May 6, 1940.**

*Photograph by John Patric*

**INDIAN CORN TURNS ITALIAN FARMHOUSES INTO INSIDE-OUT CORNCRIBS**

**From the New World opened to exploration by Italy's Columbus, corn came to Italy to become one of the country's highly valued crops. In the fertile valley of the Po, the abundant corn harvest is dried on the outside of farm buildings grouped around a courtyard. Projecting eaves of the tile roof keep rain from the roof-high grain racks.**

## COMMODITIES IN THE NEWS SERIES

The series of BULLETINS dealing with commodities in the news, starting in the current issue, will take up first the food commodities brought to the forefront by discussions of Europe's war rations and the imports which warring nations need.